

WHI Observational Study Overview

Women who were ineligible or unwilling to participate in the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) clinical trial (CT) were offered the opportunity to enroll in a concurrent long-term observational study (OS).

The observational study has enlisted over 93,000 postmenopausal women between the ages of 50 to 79. Recruitment, follow-up and analysis for the OS are concurrent with the CT. The health of OS participants will be tracked over an average of nine years. Women who joined this study fill out periodic health forms and visit the clinic three years after enrollment. OS participants are not required to take any medication or change their health habits. It does, however, follow a woman's health over a long period of time. The OS provides information that complements that obtained in the CT.

The WHI observational study (OS) has several goals. These goals include:

- To give reliable estimates of the extent to which known risk factors predict heart disease, cancers and fractures;
- To identify "new" risk factors for these and other diseases in women;
- To compare risk factors, presence of disease at the start of the study, and new occurrences of disease during the WHI across all study components; and
- To create a future resource to identify biological indicators of disease, especially substances and factors found in blood.